

Winchester Broadband Committee Approved Minutes 7/26/2021

Members Present: Nat Quevado; Leonard Picard; Nichole Pelkey; Larry Wood, Jennifer Bellan, Jennifer Howe, Liz Miller

Jen Howe opened meeting at 7:30 pm

Jen Howe resigned as chair and nominated Natalie Quevado as chair. Nichole seconds – all in favor.

Natalie Quevado resigned as vice chair. Nichole nominated Leonard Picard as chair. Liz seconds. All in favor.

Old Business:

Leonard Picard made a motion to approve minutes from 6-21-21. Larry seconds. All in favor.

Property value update from Leonard – Reviewed model. Will ask Val Carey to approve a statement that this will promote learning by providing a stable network. He also has questions to pass out to fire department. How will broadband benefit emergency services? Larry asked if they use first net? We think they use walkie-talkies via satellite now. Would it help to ask school about the functionality of robo calls? Would high speed help?

The model has a town desirability section – this impacts when people buy houses. How important is this? A survey should be put out.

Is there public access at library – yes but not very fast. Thayer library is working on getting public access.

The next step is to reach out to business park and to local businesses. Len & Nichole have a list with 3 questions to ask businesses.

1. What are your current upload & download speeds? www.speedtest.net and select “Go”
2. Does your current internet adequately meet your needs? Explain why or why not.
3. If a faster, more reliable internet option were available, do you think that would be a benefit? Explain why or why not.

Consolidated update: Nat has been talking to Jeff McGives for a few weeks – he was going to come tonight but will wait because there is a new update coming regarding a different type of plan other than putting out a bond. We were going to talk to grant writer. Nat spoke to start, there was a statewide broadband committee that has been disbanded. State will receive a large amount of federal money. We may try to apply directly to state so we do not have to match and could possibly work with Hinsdale & Swanzey. Swanzey does not need as much – we need close to 1.7 million – this is not matching – the grant required matching.

Liz heard 3rd quarter they will start wiring Winchester – but it is not entire town – it is just some roads.

Jen Bellan– Is this the money senator Shaheen was talking about? Yes.

We can still apply for the grant. The deadline is 8-17 and requires 20% matching – if we want to do that we need to finish our RFP tonight. We either apply to the grant which we may not get and requires a match 20% (may not get because it is a federal grant and we are competing with all of US). Or we apply in NH which is still under review. Or, we stick to original plan which is bonding unless something else comes up. Chesterfield model was bonding.

If we do bonding, construction is 2-3 months after. Bonding can start as soon as warrant passes.

We will stick to bonding for now- if Jeff has a better plan, we can change at that time.

The RFP is the biggest chunk of work as well as mapping.

Do we want to put a proposal out to both xfinity & consolidated to see which we like we best? Other towns have sent to both but consolidated is what most towns have used.

RFP Review

The group reviewed a sample RFP and made the suggested changes below:

Proposals are to include costs to provide service at the “street level” and should not include the costs of going from the street to the final location.

Liz made motion to include 15% discount to wire to class 6 roads. Len seconds. All are in favor.

Nichole made a motion - For existing customers if line is 200 ft from pole – run at no charge. Jen seconds. All in favor

Natalie makes motion to add licensure & proof of licensure. Nichole 2nds – all in favor.

Jenn B dropped consolidated because had to pay for repair plan for the lines themselves. The pole kept getting hit by lightning and would not work. Consolidated started requesting customers to pay for repair – need to add wording to address this for broadband. Provider must provide list of all extra fees notices or interests that could be applied at any given time for the life of the bond. Nat makes motion to add wording that expresses concern for outside extra fees given by provider. Nichole seconds. All in favor.

Proposals need to address all of population as well as future development (outside of class 6). Nat proposes. Larry seconds. All in favor .

Mapping

We have data, but need to plot it on a map. Larry will pick up mapping. Due by Monday 8/2.

All underserved should be red dots. All meeting min speeds should be green dots. We have a spreadsheet in google drives - Natalie will share.

Social Media Site

We have a Facebook account that we don't do a lot with. We should be sending out updates, surveys, link to town page, etc. . Natalie makes a motion for Larry to update our social media page. Len seconds. All in favor.

Len – when is report due? Nat – before august 4th.

New Business :

We have a meeting with Selectboard on August 4th. We want some of the Covid funds coming into to take load off bond. Only RED Committee has approached the board so far. Natalie will write the ask for the Selectboard. We will also ask for a mailer for all residents to bring awareness of committee and our work. Natalie will have done by 8/2. Jen will not be at 8/2 unless she can dial in through Zoom.

Selectboard is at 630. We are 2nd on agenda and will most likely be around 7.

Len makes motion to adjourn at 9:13 pm. Larry seconds. All in favor.